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The As-Is Journal Review Process: Let Authors Own Their Ideas

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Working Paper No. 2006 - 09

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The as-is journal review process: Let authors own their ideas

ABSTRACT

Recently, the problems associated with the existing journal review process aroused discussions from seasoned management researchers, who have also made useful suggestions for improving the process. To complement these suggestions, we propose a more radical change: a manuscript should be reviewed on an “as is” basis and its fate be determined in one round of review. The as-is review process shortens the time period from submission to final acceptance, reduces the workload of editors, referees and authors, provides frank author feedback to referees, and, most important, lets authors own all of the ideas in their publications.

Keywords: Journals, reviews, authors, submissions

JEL classifications: Z0

There are those that will find the educational impact of the review process just as it should be: tough and fair. But if we're honest, most of us have chafed under its bit, feeling that the requested changes were unnecessary or distracting, or puzzling as to how to satisfy diametrically opposed referee comments (Bailey, 2004: 197).

The above quote probably neatly summarizes the attitude of many researchers toward the journal review process. It reflects the fact that the process has turned into a predicament: On the one hand, there does not seem to be a better alternative than the existing format. On the other hand, the process has been inflated to the extent that it hinders the progress of knowledge generation.

In the management discipline, there was recently a revival of interest in reflecting on the review process (e.g., Bedeian, 2003, 2004; Miner, 2003; Starbuck, 2003, 2005). While there have been a lot of discussions about the various problems of peer review, Bedeian shrewdly points out that “the consequences of this inflation in the review process for the management discipline’s published record and, in turn, its scientific progress, have likewise received virtually no attention” (2004: 206). In order to address this neglected problem, he makes ten suggestions for improving the review process. To complement these suggestions, we propose a radical change in the process that deals with some of the issues that are not covered by Bedeian’s suggestions or suggestions made by other researchers (e.g., Miner, 2003; Spector, 1998). The next section summarizes the major problems of the existing journal review process. It is followed by a discussion of how our proposed as-is review process can help solve these problems.

WHAT HAS GONE WRONG?

Journals in most disciplines adopt the peer review procedure to assess the quality of a submission. The main purpose of peer review is to have an objective evaluation of a submission in order to assure that each published article meets the rigorous standards advocated by a journal.

Some editors call such reviews developmental, in the sense that referees of a manuscript are expected to give constructive comments, which would help authors improve the quality of the manuscript through a couple of rounds of revision. Even if the editorial decision is to reject the manuscript, authors may benefit from these comments when they revise and submit it to another journal. Though well intentioned, the developmental review process¹ has become seriously inflated during the last few decades:

Reviews that at one time were typically short overviews (one page or less) of major strengths/weaknesses have grown in length and thoroughness, to where now eight or more single spaced pages are not uncommon. By the middle 1980s journals began to require detailed point by point replies to reviewer comments to accompany resubmissions. These too have undergone inflation from short lists of whether or not each reviewer comment was addressed to lengthy companion documents that can be longer than the submitted manuscript. Such point by points often include detailed background, ancillary analyses, references, tables and figures that are not in the submitted manuscript. Often the review process becomes a struggle between authors and reviewers with editors serving as referee through round after round of resubmission (Spector, 1998: 1).

This problem is aggravated by the fact that editors often side with referees and typically act as if referees are more competent than authors (Starbuck, 2003). They usually require that authors comply with the changes recommended by referees. Some editors even stress in their editorial letters that it is a “high-risk” revision, with the unintended effect of making authors wary of the danger of going against referees’ wishes in their revisions. In other words, the developmental review process has evolved to the state where authors are “forced” to develop

¹ To distinguish from our proposed as-is review process, we call the existing system of journal editing, which involves multiple rounds of revision, the developmental review process. Both processes rely on peer review. We admit that peer review has its own limitations. Yet, despite the limitations, no viable alternatives exist (Eisenhart, 2002). Rojewski and Domenico (2004) go further to argue that “(d)espite the criticisms and flaws associated with the peer review process, it remains our best option for judging the merits of scientific research” (2004: 50). It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the pros and cons of peer review.

their manuscripts along the lines dictated by editors and referees if they want their manuscripts to be accepted for publication. As such, the process has led to some destructive consequences.

Referee Comments of Questionable Quality

A simple fact about peer review is that not all referee comments help with strengthening a manuscript. As Beyer, a former editor of the *Academy of Management Journal*, notes, “Some (reviews) are unclear, some are ill informed, some try to impose reviewers’ ideas on authors, and some are downright nasty and destructive” (1996: 292). We are not arguing that referees do not take their responsibilities seriously. On the contrary, many referees do try to give authors what they perceive as constructive comments. That said, referee comments are sometimes of questionable quality for several reasons.

First, there is no formal training for referees, who usually pick up their review skills through learning by doing. Reputable researchers have a higher tendency to decline to serve as ad hoc referees: the “decline-to-review rate appears to be (positively) correlated with the reviewing expertise, stature in the field, and professorial rank” (Northcraft, 2001: 1079). On the other hand, inexperienced referees may “feel that they haven’t done their job unless they have found a study’s flaws” (Ashford, 1996: 124), and so tend to engage in what Van Lange (1999) has tagged the SLAM (Stressing the *Limiting Aspects of Manuscripts*) mode of review, in which they give detailed, harsh comments. One objective is to impress the editors, with the aim of gaining an invitation to join the editorial board (Bedeian, 2004).

Second, editors have limited knowledge of referees’ areas of expertise. Referees may be asked to review manuscripts that fall outside of their research areas. In this case, they are not true peers of the authors and are less likely to offer good-quality comments. Bedeian (2003) reports

the results of a survey of 173 lead authors of articles published in the *Academy of Management Journal* and *Academy of Management Review* over the period 1999 to 2001. More than half (54.7%) of the authors replied that they had been asked to comment on a manuscript that they were not competent enough to review. Worse still, more than one third (36.6%) admitted that they still submitted a review.

Third, the assumption implicitly made in the literature on scientific publishing is that referees act in the interests of science as a whole. Engers and Gans explicitly assume that referees “are concerned about the quality of academic journals” (1998: 1341). Nevertheless, the notion that individuals act according to the general social interest is inconsistent with the rational choice model of man (e.g., Becker, 1976; Frey, 1999). Anonymous referees have no property rights to the journal they advise. They may therefore not be concerned about the effect their advice has on the journal. The absence of property rights is expected to lead to shirking in some cases. Referees find themselves in a classical low cost situation (Kirchgässner, 1992). Their decisions with respect to the evaluation of the manuscripts in their hands are of little or no consequence for them, provided they keep to the formal rules of the profession. But, with respect to the content of the evaluation, they are free to do whatever they want. In a low cost situation, referees may attribute some weight to what they consider to be the “common good.” However, personal interests also play a role. Referees may be tempted to evaluate manuscripts according to whether their own contributions are sufficiently appreciated and whether their own publications are quoted. This problem is exacerbated by the absence of author feedback to referee comments, as discussed below.

Infringement of Authors’ Rights

The existence of poor-quality referee comments becomes more destructive when authors are “forced” to incorporate these comments into their manuscripts. Theoretically, authors have the right not to accept some of the referees’ suggestions when they work on their revisions, or even to withdraw their submissions if they think that the suggested changes are unreasonable. Notwithstanding, they are fully aware of the fact that they only have a chance of getting their paper accepted if they almost slavishly follow the demands formulated. The existing system of journal editing virtually forces academics to become what Frey (2003) has metaphorically dubbed “prostitutes”: they sell themselves for money (and fame). Authors not prepared to prostitute themselves are thrown out of academia because they fail to publish. Their integrity may survive, but the authors disappear as academics. In the words of Ashforth, the “scales are tipped so decisively in favor of reviewers that authors who rebut reviewers’ suggestions are playing with their academic lives” (2005: 402). Few authors, especially at the beginning of their careers, are principled enough and bold enough to turn down a revise-and-resubmit invitation, especially from a top journal. In Bedeian’s (2003) survey, for instance, about one third (34.1%) of the authors had experienced pressure to revise their manuscripts according to editors’ or referees’ personal preferences. In addition, almost one quarter (23.7%) reported that, by revising their manuscripts, they had in fact made changes that they considered incorrect. In other words, whenever a poor-quality comment is made on a manuscript that is eventually published, it is quite likely that the comment will be converted into print.

The basic rationale underlying the requirement for multiple rounds of revision is to ensure that manuscripts are revised to the satisfaction of editors and referees. More often than not, this requirement is turned into a situation of what Bedeian calls ghostwriting – “the demand that authors conform to the conceptual and stylistic preferences of editors and referees” (2004:

207). After a few rounds of extensive revision under the guidance of the editor and referees, authors sometimes wonder whether they are the genuine owner of the end product. One of Bedeian's respondents wrote: "In the end, [the editor] actually rewrote sections of the paper to include his preferred terminology. I'm somewhat surprised he didn't take authorship credit" (2003: 335). Similarly, Roth recalls his experience as an author: "When one of my articles is finally published, I always have a sense that I am only partially the author" (2002: 225). Editors and referees seem to forget that articles are published under the names of their authors, not editors or referees. If authors are solely accountable for all the ideas expressed in their articles, these ideas should be truly their own. In short, authors' rights to protect the intellectual integrity of their works should be respected.

Unduly Long Review Process

In recent years, the time period between submission and final acceptance of manuscripts in economics has dramatically increased (Ellison, 2002). A similar trend also seems to occur in management where journals rarely publish a manuscript without going through at least two rounds of review. The whole process from first submission to final acceptance can easily take more than two years. For example, Kogut and Zander describe the experience of getting their highly cited article, Kogut and Zander (1992), accepted by *Organization Science* as "a rather torturous 4-year process" (2003: 506).

A major reason for the unduly long review process is the practice of having multiple rounds of revision. Another reason is the huge amount of time that authors sometimes have to spend on revising and resubmitting their manuscripts. For higher ranking journals, authors often have to make substantial changes before their manuscripts are accepted. These time-consuming

changes include adding or deleting hypotheses, reanalyzing data using a different statistical method, adopting a different theoretical framework, and collecting additional data.

In addition to revising their manuscripts, authors are required to write point-by-point responses to referee comments. These responses serve the purpose of convincing referees that the manuscripts concerned deserve acceptance. As such, authors often spend a substantial amount of time on crafting their responses. As mentioned by Spector (1998) above, a point-by-point response can be longer than the accompanying manuscript.

Another time-consuming aspect of revising a manuscript concerns the need to deal with the divergent, and sometimes conflicting, demands made by referees. Agreement between referees is typically low in the social sciences. During the first two or three months after Starbuck became the editor of *Administrative Science Quarterly*, he received more than 500 pairs of reviews, with a low level of consistency. Counting an “accept” as 1, a “revise” as 0, and a “reject” as -1, he arrived at a remarkably low correlation of 0.12 (Starbuck, 2003). The need to satisfy diametrically opposed referee comments may, as a result, weaken the cohesiveness of the arguments presented in a manuscript, and thus lower the quality of published articles. For example, an author who received a revise-and-resubmit invitation from *Administrative Science Quarterly* described the outcome of satisfying all the referees’ demands as making his paper one “that will be all things to all people” (Murnighan, 1996: 135).

If a manuscript is finally accepted, its authors at least feel rewarded for all the time and effort they have spent on struggling through the review process. The outcome of receiving a rejection after one, two or even three rounds of revision is often a nightmare. One of us (we’ll refer to him as Referee 1) once reviewed a manuscript for a top management journal, and recommended rejection. The editor invited the authors to revise and resubmit, probably because

the other two referees did not reject the manuscript. Referee 1 reviewed the second draft and again recommended rejection. However, the editor was “kind” enough to give the authors another chance of further developing their manuscript. Finally, the third draft was rejected. In this developmental review process, that lasted 17 months altogether, the authors went through two rounds of extensive revision, and wrote three significantly different manuscripts and a total of 38 single-spaced pages of point-by-point responses. The editor and three referees reviewed three significantly different manuscripts. Who benefited from this process? If the authors submit any one of the three manuscripts to another journal, they will probably be asked to write another significantly different manuscript when going through that journal’s developmental review process with a different set of referees. Most, if not all, authors would prefer not to work on a revision that is eventually rejected, no matter how useful the comments appear to be. If it is a rejection, the sooner that is communicated, the better.

Absence of Feedback to Referees

Peer review should mean that authors and referees are indeed peers. While authors benefit from referee comments, referees should benefit from author feedback too. Author feedback not only helps referees improve their review skills, but also enables stimulating intellectual exchanges between authors and referees. Moreover, editors may use author feedback as an indicator of the referees’ competence and performance.

However, in one of his recommendations to authors for increasing the odds that their manuscripts be accepted for publication, Meyer states: “No reviewer is ever wrong... It is self-destructive to assume otherwise” (1996: 280). A major problem of the developmental review process is that few authors dare challenge referees when they are offered the opportunity of

revision and resubmission. For instance, Romanelli recalls her feeling after reading the comments from a referee whom she cursed for “meanness, cowardice, and stupidity”: “I was angry that I would have to respond to this reviewer in a tone that was ‘appreciative’ for help that has not been given” (1996: 265).

Authors often try their best to slavishly accommodate virtually all referee comments, even if they think that some of these comments make little sense or are downright wrong. When authors decline to accept a comment, they usually state their reasons in a tactful manner in order not to antagonize the referee who made the comment. Rarely do authors frankly point out the problems of a comment. In other words, referees seldom receive useful feedback from authors. Referees are always right because they have never been told that they are wrong. Absence of author feedback also implies that referees are seldom held accountable for their comments. This may encourage irresponsible referees to make casual comments because they know very well that their comments will not be challenged.

THE AS-IS REVIEW

To tackle the above problems, we suggest making a radical change to the existing review process: a manuscript should be reviewed on an “as is” basis. Similar to developmental review, the process is double-blind and referees are encouraged to provide constructive comments on a manuscript. In contrast with developmental review, referees are given only two options when advising the editor regarding whether the manuscript should be published: accept or reject. The option of (minor or major) revision and resubmission is ruled out. Based on the referees’ recommendations, and his or her own reading of the manuscript, the editor makes the decision to accept or reject the manuscript. If the editor accepts the manuscript (subject to normal copy

editing), he or she will inform the authors accordingly, enclosing the editorial comments and comments made by the referees. It is up to the authors to decide whether, and to what extent, they would like to incorporate these comments when they work on their revision for eventual publication. As a condition of acceptance, the authors are required to write a point-by-point response to the comments. If they refuse to accept a comment, they have to clearly state the reasons. The editor will pass on the response to the referees. In sum, the fate of a submitted manuscript is determined by one round of review, and authors of an accepted manuscript are required to make one round of revision.

An as-is review also allows the option of having more than one round of revision. If editors and referees would like to help further develop a manuscript that has been accepted in the first round of review, they may comment on the revised version of the manuscript. Again, authors are not obliged to accept these comments and can selectively incorporate them in their second round of revision. In such a case, an as-is review preserves the merit of developmental review in working with authors through more than one round of revision. However, it avoids the risk of forcing authors to accept comments that they do not agree with.

As long as editors maintain the same acceptance rates, the as-is review will not affect authors' chance of getting their manuscripts published. For both the as-is and developmental review processes, it is always advisable for authors to get some useful feedback by sharing their manuscripts with trusted colleagues and/or presenting them in workshops before submission (see Brown, 2005). Our proposal makes no difference to authors whose manuscripts are rejected; they may be just as disappointed and frustrated as under the existing system (see Murnighan, 1996). Yet, it considerably eases the pain of working on a revision. An as-is review has little impact on editors' work, other than reducing their workload and enabling the possibility of receiving frank

feedback from the authors. As far as referees are concerned, an as-is review calls for a significant change in their behavior. Under the developmental review process, referees rarely recommend accepting a manuscript in the first round of review. They recommend acceptance only when they are satisfied with the changes made by authors after at least a couple of rounds of revision. Referees have to adjust this behavior when they carry out an as-is review. They should judge the publishability of a manuscript in its current form relative to the standards of the journal concerned. In terms of the content of a review, the as-is review process treasures constructive comments just as much as the developmental review process.

Advantages

The as-is review process has several distinct advantages over the developmental process, and at least partially solves the abovementioned problems. First, we admit that, under both the as-is and developmental review processes, an editor may wrongly reject a manuscript based on sloppy reviews. However, for manuscripts that are accepted, since authors would reject referee comments that they believe will weaken their manuscript, the as-is review process reduces the chance of poor-quality comments being incorporated into a published article.

Second, by not forcing authors to meet all the demands of editors and referees, the as-is review process reduces the extent of intellectual prostitution. It preserves the authorial voice because authors are allowed to selectively accept the comments given by editors and referees. In other words, an as-is review upholds the developmental function, yet does not force authors to follow suggestions that they find mistaken or ill advised. It allows “authors to maintain their own persona as reflected in their writing styles, choice of language, and construction of arguments” (Bedeian, 2004: 208).

Third, since the fate of a manuscript is decided in only one round of review, an as-is review significantly shortens the whole review process, and speeds up the dissemination of new knowledge. It reduces the workload of authors, referees, and editors. Moreover, authors no longer face the risk of wasting their time on making substantial changes to manuscripts that are eventually rejected. If their manuscripts are rejected in the first round of review, they may make use of the comments to improve their manuscripts for submission to other journals. This advantage is especially critical for researchers who are working for their tenure.

Finally, under the as-is review process, authors are more likely to provide frank feedback to referee comments once their manuscripts have been accepted. Such feedback is one form of intellectual dialogue that benefits authors, editors and referees. It also helps referees develop their review skills. Editors may use the feedback to assess the performance of referees. As such, referees will be more careful when writing their comments. An as-is review thus contributes to raising the quality of referee comments by giving power to authors (whose manuscripts are accepted) to “review” these comments.

Concerns

Editors and referees, who are in full control of the developmental review process, may have some concerns about our proposal. An immediate concern is that the as-is review process may result in a flood of rejected manuscripts. This worry originates from the mentality of operating under the developmental process where manuscripts are rarely accepted in the first round of review without going through multiple rounds of revision. In other words, virtually none of the first submissions are considered good enough to be published on an “as is” basis. An as-is review calls for a different editorial mentality. Suppose the acceptance rate of a journal is

set at 10%. The job of the editor is to accept the best 10% of submissions based on referees' recommendations and on his or her own reading in the first round of review. This is in fact the system that most research grants use in deciding which research proposals to support. In brief, both the as-is and developmental review processes can arrive at the same acceptance rate, though the pool of accepted manuscripts is likely to be different.

A related concern is that, under the as-is approach, editors are "forced" to make decisions of rejection or acceptance based on "limited" information in the first round of review, whereas developmental review allows them to observe the improvement (or the lack of it) of a resubmitted manuscript through multiple rounds of revision before the final editorial decision is made. This concern is more apparent than real. It should be noted that, under the developmental approach, editors do reject a substantial portion of submissions in the first round. For instance, about 84% of the manuscripts recently submitted to the *Academy of Management Journal* were rejected after the first review and, of the remaining 16%, about half of them were eventually published (Rynes et al., 2005). If the acceptance rate of 8% is maintained, an as-is review requires the editors to reject 92%, instead of 84%, of the first submissions; that is, the increase in rejections is only 8%. While we appreciate the difficulty of making editorial decisions, without any intent to be disrespectful to editors, we believe there is some insight in the following comment made by a noted marketing scholar:

Making decisions, of course, always involves the risk of making wrong decisions. People who cannot live with the dilemma of having to make decisions should not become editors, however brilliant they may be academically (Homburg, 2003: 349).

More importantly, editors often evaluate resubmitted manuscripts based on the extent to which authors have successfully incorporated the changes suggested by them and by the referees. In other words, the additional information that editors receive in the second and later rounds of

revision is, to a large extent, related to this compliance issue. As we argued above, it is likely that authors' rights to protect the intellectual integrity of their works will be infringed in these revisions. To preserve such rights, we would suggest that a manuscript be evaluated based on its own merits rather than its compliance with the form desired by the editor and referees.

There may be a concern about quality control: under the as-is review process, authors may try to minimize their work and make as few changes as possible to their accepted manuscripts, thereby lowering the quality of published articles. This concern is understandable, as Sutton states, "before my stint as associate editor (of *Administrative Science Quarterly*), ... I thought that most authors would seek to do as little work as possible when making revisions, and that once their papers were accepted for publication, they would really start slacking off" (1996: 303). While this is a real possibility, authors would like to see the best version of their manuscripts in print, and to make sure that they do not publish something they would regret later (Murnighan, 1996). It is therefore in their interest to include comments that, in their opinion, will strengthen the manuscripts. For instance, contrary to Sutton's initial thought, he in fact noticed that "the closer their papers get to publication, the more concerned most authors become about each nuance" (1996: 303).

If authors truly think that few of the comments are useful, editors and referees should respect that judgment. Again, note that authors, not editors or referees, should own and be held accountable for every single idea in their published articles. Moreover, a manuscript being accepted on an "as is" basis implies that it has reached the minimum standards of the journal concerned in its current form. If it has not, it should not be accepted in the first place.

The best indicator of the quality of a published article is its impact on subsequent research. Article impact is generally defined and measured in terms of citation counts (Bergh,

Perry, & Hanke, 2006), although citation counts have their own limitations (see Aksnes, 2006; Baird & Oppenheim, 1994). The research community, as a whole, is in a better position than editors and referees to judge quality. There is a long list of seminal works that were initially rejected by journal review but were heavily cited subsequently (Campanario, 1996). Editors should avoid the attitude that they have to micro-manage a revision in order to ensure quality. Our recommendation to editors is: once a manuscript is accepted by the as-is review, let its authors worry about, and let the research community judge, the quality of the end product. In fact, in 1960, *Econometrica* and the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* had a system “where journals simply decide whether or not to publish authors’ submissions, and questions about papers can be debated in the literature” (Ellison, 2002: 990). That system throws some light on an approach that is different from what we have now. If a journal adopts the as-is review process, it will be interesting to investigate whether the quality of its published articles will change under the new process. We venture to predict that the change, if any, will improve the quality.

Another concern is about salvaging manuscripts that are only “diamonds in the rough” at the time of submission. We admit that such manuscripts will likely be rejected by an as-is review. Surely there are cases where the insights and contributions of these manuscripts, as perceived by editors and referees, are fleshed out after a few rounds of extensive revision. Nevertheless, the whole process involves what Meyer (1996) calls “activist reviewing,” verging on ghostwriting. The end product that emerges from the process may not be in the form its authors desire. (Of course, we do not rule out the possibility of having an end product that the editor, referees and authors are all happy with.) Furthermore, there is no certainty that a manuscript can be developed to publication standards. The review experience described above of one of us is a clear-cut example of failing to salvage a manuscript.

Although an as-is review rejects manuscripts that contain potential contributions, but are not publishable in the current form, authors will still benefit from referee comments when revising their manuscripts for submission to other journals. We should assume that authors are competent professionals who can probably revise their manuscripts, given some general guidelines (Romanelli, 1996). The function of the editor of a scientific journal is not to teach authors what they should have learned from their doctoral supervisors (Eysenck, 1980).

Last but not least, this concern is not valid for top journals. As mentioned above, about 84% of the recent submissions to the *Academy of Management Journal* were rejected in the first round (Rynes et al., 2005). As Miner comments on the issue of the high rejection rate, “A cost inherent in the present reviewing system is that it rejects a substantial number of articles that are just as good, if not better, than what is published” (2003: 341). When editors routinely turn away “diamonds,” why should they bother about “diamonds in the rough”?

A further concern is the difference between our proposal and the practice of making the “accept” or “reject” decision on the first revision, advocated, say, by Beyer (1996). There are similarities and differences. On the one hand, both shorten the review process and involve less work for authors, referees and editors, though our proposal involves a greater change than the aforesaid practice. On the other hand, the aforesaid practice does not generate frank author feedback to referee comments, because authors do not dare challenge the comments, and work hard to incorporate the comments in the first revision. As such, the practice also does not protect the authorial voice.

CONCLUSION

At least in the management discipline, if not in others, the well-intentioned developmental review process has been inflated to the extent that it becomes a straitjacket hindering the progress of knowledge generation. Recently, this situation aroused the attention of seasoned researchers. We appreciate the genuine intention of many editors and referees to assist authors in strengthening their manuscripts through multiple rounds of review. We also appreciate the efforts made by some editors to improve the review process and make it more transparent (e.g., Baily, 2005; Brief, 2003; Cappelli, 2005; Rynes et al., 2005). Nevertheless, we believe it is time to make a more radical change, and propose the as-is review process as an alternative to the existing developmental review process.

To summarize, the as-is review process re-establishes the basic roles of authors, referees and editors. For authors, the act of submitting a manuscript to a journal is to explore the possibility of getting their ideas published. This act does not imply an obligation to change any ideas against their will. For referees, their role is to advise editors regarding the publishability of manuscripts. This role does not come with the right to impose their own ideas on authors. For editors, their role is to decide whether to accept or reject a submitted manuscript, based on the recommendations of referees and their own reading. This role entails neither the right nor the obligation to help authors develop the manuscript to their satisfaction and to the satisfaction of referees.

Although our proposal mitigates some important shortcomings of the developmental review process, it certainly does not claim to solve all the problems of scientific publishing. For instance, it does not address other significant issues, such as the validity and reliability of peer review, lack of formal training for referees, referees reviewing manuscripts that are beyond their areas of expertise, the SLAM mode of review, and absence of feedback from authors whose

manuscripts are rejected. Some of these issues have been dealt with by the suggestions of Bedeian (2004) and others. With a concerted effort, we are confident that the management discipline will be able to revitalize its journal review process and make it truly developmental and educational.

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